

What is claimed is:

1. A system for altering a function of a printing device, the system comprising:

5 a printing device having a cartridge slot configured to receive any of a plurality of different cartridge types;

a computing device including a processor, wherein the processor is linked to the printing device and is configured to control operation of the printing device; and

10 first instructions loadable on the computing device, wherein the first instructions are specific for a first cartridge type and control operation of a first cartridge of the first cartridge type when the first cartridge is disposed in the cartridge slot of the printing device.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

15 second instructions loadable on the computing device, wherein the second instructions are specific for a second cartridge type and control operation of a second cartridge of the second cartridge type when the second cartridge is disposed in the cartridge slot of the printing device;

wherein the first instructions are different than the second instructions; and  
20 wherein the first cartridge type is different than the second cartridge type.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the first instructions are non-specific to the printing device, the system further comprising a printing device driver configured to translate cartridge-specific instructions to printing-device-interpretable instructions.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the first instructions are resident in memory on the computing device.

30 5. The system of claim 2, wherein the first instructions are resident on a mass storage device on the computing device.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the computing device is integrated within the printing device.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the first instructions are configured  
5 to provide user-selectable options regarding the use of the first cartridge type.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the different cartridge types may be selected from a group consisting of a coating cartridge, a specialty ink cartridge and a craft cartridge.

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9. A printer comprising:

a cartridge slot adapted to receive any of plural cartridges of different cartridge types; and

a cartridge received within the cartridge slot;

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wherein the printer is adapted to function to produce an effect based on the type of cartridge in the cartridge slot.

10. The printer of claim 9, further comprising instructions specific to the cartridge, the instructions adapted to control operation of the cartridge.

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11. The printer of claim 9, wherein the plurality of different cartridge types includes a standard ink cartridge and a specialty ink cartridge, the cartridge slot being adapted to receive either of the standard ink cartridge and the specialty ink cartridge.

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12. The printer of claim 9, wherein the plurality of different cartridge types includes a specialty ink cartridge, and where the effect based on the type of cartridge is a specialty olfactory effect.

13. The printer of claim 9, wherein the plurality of different cartridge types includes a specialty craft cartridge, and where the effect based on the type of cartridge is a specialty craft effect.

5        14. The printer of claim 13, wherein the specialty craft effect includes at least one of perforating a medium, scoring the medium, and dispensing glue on the medium.

10      15. The printer of claim 9, wherein the plurality of different cartridge types includes a specialty coating cartridge, and where the effect based on the type of cartridge includes dispensing a protective coating on a medium.

16. A method of changing the function of a printing device, the method comprising:

15      providing one of a first cartridge and a second cartridge, each for use in a same cartridge slot in a printing device, wherein the first cartridge is of a first cartridge type configured to produce a first specialty effect on a medium, and the second cartridge is of a second cartridge type configured to produce a second specialty effect on a medium;

20      receiving cartridge-operation instructions specific to operation of a respective one of the first cartridge and the second cartridge inserted in the cartridge slot; and

25      operating the respective one of the first cartridge and the second cartridge inserted in the cartridge slot in accordance with the cartridge-operation instructions to produce the respective specialty effect on a medium as the medium is advanced through the printing device.

30      17. The method of claim 16, further comprising loading control software containing the cartridge-operation instructions on a computing device linked to the printing device.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein at least one of the first cartridge and the second cartridge may be selected from a group consisting of a specialty coating cartridge, a specialty ink cartridge and a specialty craft cartridge.

5        19. A program storage device readable by a machine, the storage device tangibly embodying a program of commands executable by the machine to:

identify a cartridge operably disposed in a printing device as being configured to produce a desired specialty effect; and

10      direct operation of the cartridge by sending cartridge-operation instructions from a processor to the printing device to produce the desired specialty effect on a medium as the medium is advanced through the printing device.

15      20. The program storage device of claim 19, wherein the cartridge-operation instructions are specific to the identified cartridge.

21. The program storage device of claim 19, where the commands executable to identify a cartridge disposed in a printing device including commands executable to identify a cartridge type of the cartridge from a plurality 20 of different cartridge types, and where the different cartridge types are selected from a group consisting of a specialty coating cartridge, a specialty ink cartridge and a specialty craft cartridge.

22. The program storage device of claim 19, further comprising 25 commands executable to provide options to a user regarding operation of the cartridge and application of a specialty effect to a medium.

23. A printing device adapted to produce a plurality of different effects, the printing device comprising:

a slot for receiving any of a plurality of different cartridge types, each cartridge type configured to produce a different effect and to be operably disposed within the printing device;

means for programming the printing device to operate any of the plurality of different cartridge types when operably disposed within the slot; and

means for operating any of the plurality of different cartridge types when operably disposed within the slot to produce a selected effect on a medium, the selected effect associated with the cartridge type operably disposed within the slot.

24. A kit for a printing system, wherein the printing system includes a computing device having a processor and a printing device, the kit comprising:

an accessory cartridge configured to be positioned within a universal cartridge slot in the printing device, the accessory cartridge configured to generate a specialty effect; and

instructions loadable on the computing device and operable by the processor, the instructions being specific to the accessory cartridge and configured to operate the accessory cartridge to produce a specialty effect on a medium when the accessory cartridge is positioned within the universal cartridge slot in the printing device.

25. The kit of claim 24, wherein the instructions loadable on the computing device are non-specific to the printing device.